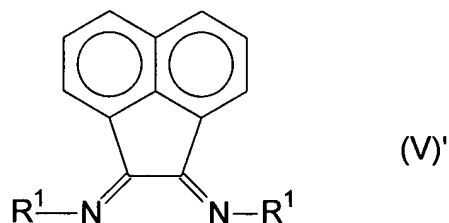


## AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 13, line 12, and ending at line 15, with the following paragraph.

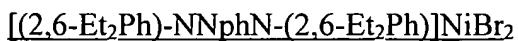
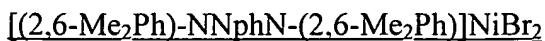
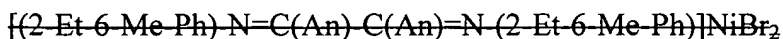
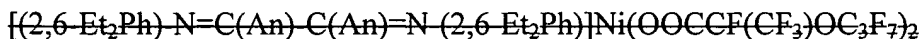
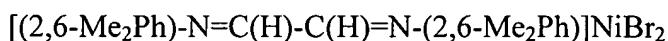
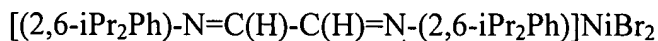
According to a particularly preferred embodiment of the invention, in formula (V) the two substituents  $R^2$  form a 1,8-naphthylene group ~~an acenaphthenquinone group~~, thus resulting a ligand of formula (V)':

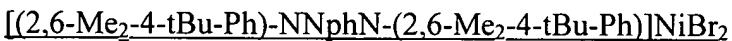
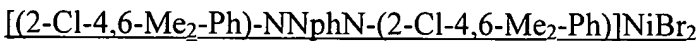
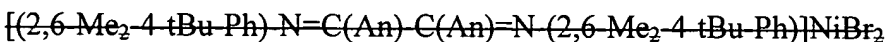
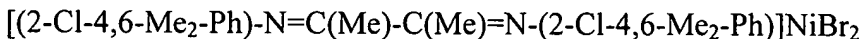
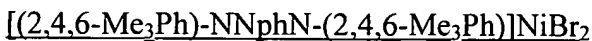
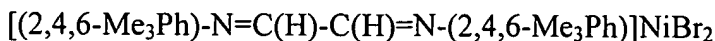
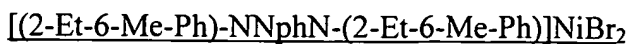


wherein  $R^1$  has the meaning reported above.

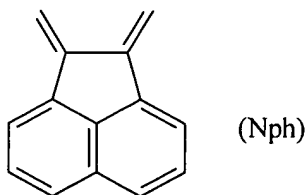
Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 14, line 16, and ending at page 15, line 4, with the following paragraph.

Preferred late transition metal compounds of formula (I), wherein the bidentate ligand L corresponds to formula (V), are reported in the following for illustrative purposes:





or the corresponding  $\text{LNiCl}_2$ ,  $\text{LNiMe}_2$ ,  $\text{LNiBrCl}$  or  $\text{LNiBrMe}$  complexes, L being one of the ligands reported above, wherein Nph has formula (Nph):

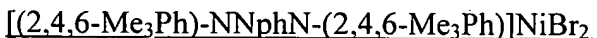
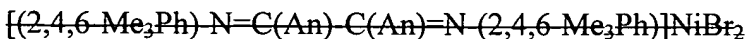


An = acenaphthenquinone, Me = methyl, iPr = iso-propyl, tBu = ter-butyl and Ph = phenyl.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 28, line 32, and ending at line 32, with the following paragraph.



Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 29, line 2, and ending at line 2, with the following paragraph.



Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 30, line 2, and ending at line 3, with the following paragraph.

~~Treatment of the deactivated homopolymer with M-MAO/[(2,6-Et<sub>2</sub>Ph) N=C(An)-C(An)=N-(2,6-Et<sub>2</sub>Ph)]NiBr<sub>2</sub> mixture [stage (II)(b)] and ethylene polymerization [stage (III)]~~

Treatment of the deactivated homopolymer with M-MAO/[(2,6-Et<sub>2</sub>Ph)-NNphN-(2,6-Et<sub>2</sub>Ph)]NiBr<sub>2</sub> mixture [stage (II)(b)] and ethylene polymerization [stage (III)].

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 30, line 7, and ending at line 13, with the following paragraph.

~~At the same time, 4.5 mg (6.78 μmol) of the catalyst [(2,6-Et<sub>2</sub>Ph) N=C(An)-C(An)=N-(2,6-Et<sub>2</sub>Ph)]NiBr<sub>2</sub> were dissolved in 10 ml of a solvent mixture consisting of 95%vol toluene and 5%vol. heptane, in a glass vessel, and to the solution was added M-MAO so to obtain a molar ratio Al/Ni = 167 (the catalyst concentration was 2.6 μmol/L); the obtained precontact mixture was maintained under stirring for 2 minutes, at room temperature. The obtained catalytic mixture was then loaded into the reactor with a nitrogen overpressure, and stirred for 2-3 minutes. The propane was flashed off in few minutes, while maintaining the temperature at 20-30°C.~~

At the same time, 4.5 mg (6.78 μmol) of the catalyst [(2,6-Et<sub>2</sub>Ph)-NNphN-(2,6-Et<sub>2</sub>Ph)]NiBr<sub>2</sub> were dissolved in 10 ml of a solvent mixture consisting of 95%vol toluene and 5%vol. heptane, in a glass vessel, and to the solution was added M-MAO so to obtain a molar ratio Al/Ni = 167 (the catalyst concentration was 2.6 μmol/L); the obtained precontact mixture was maintained under stirring for 2 minutes, at room temperature. The obtained catalytic mixture was then loaded into the reactor with a nitrogen overpressure, and stirred for 2-3 minutes. The propane was flashed off in few minutes, while maintaining the temperature at 20-30°C.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 30, line 28, and ending at line 31, with the following paragraph.

~~At the same time, 7.42  $\mu$ mol of the catalyst [(2,6-Et<sub>2</sub>Ph) N=C(An) C(An)=N (2,6-Et<sub>2</sub>Ph)]NiBr<sub>2</sub> were dissolved in 6 ml of toluene and 0.54 mmole of M-MAO were added, thus obtaining a molar ratio Al/Ni = 60; the mixture was then maintained under stirring for few minutes, at room temperature.~~

At the same time, 7.42  $\mu$ mol of the catalyst [(2,6-Et<sub>2</sub>Ph)-NNphN-(2,6-Et<sub>2</sub>Ph)]NiBr<sub>2</sub> were dissolved in 6 ml of toluene and 0.54 mmole of M-MAO were added, thus obtaining a molar ratio Al/Ni = 60; the mixture was then maintained under stirring for few minutes, at room temperature.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 31, line 16, and ending at line 18, with the following paragraph.

~~Silica particles were suspended in a solution of 0.2 mmol of the catalyst [(2,6-Et<sub>2</sub>Ph) N=C(An) C(An)=N (2,6-Et<sub>2</sub>Ph)]NiBr<sub>2</sub> in 100 ml of toluene for 2 hours, at room temperature, thus obtaining a molar ratio Al/Ni = 138.~~

Silica particles were suspended in a solution of 0.2 mmol of the catalyst [(2,6-Et<sub>2</sub>Ph)-NNphN-(2,6-Et<sub>2</sub>Ph)]NiBr<sub>2</sub> in 100 ml of toluene for 2 hours, at room temperature, thus obtaining a molar ratio Al/Ni = 138.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 32, line 21, and ending at line 28, with the following paragraph.

~~The procedure described in Example 1 was repeated with the only difference that, in stage (II)(b), the catalyst [(2,6-Et<sub>2</sub>Ph) N=C(An) C(An)=N (2,6-Et<sub>2</sub>Ph)]NiBr<sub>2</sub> was dissolved in 10 ml of a solvent mixture containing 55%vol. toluene, 23%vol. methylene chloride and 22%vol. heptane, in a glass vessel, and to this solution M-MAO was added together with 0.136 mmol of 1-hexene so to obtain a molar ratio Al/Ni = 710. The precontact mixture was injected into the reactor as described in Example 1. Then polymerization stage (III) was carried out at a total pressure of 2,500 kPa (25 bar) at 60°C, for 2 hours, thus obtaining 175g of polymer composition, in the form of spheroid particles having good flowability and containing 42.9%wt. of ethylene polymer.~~

The procedure described in Example 1 was repeated with the only difference that, in stage (II)(b), the catalyst [(2,6-Et<sub>2</sub>Ph)-NNphN-(2,6-Et<sub>2</sub>Ph)]NiBr<sub>2</sub> was dissolved in 10 ml

of a solvent mixture containing 55%vol. toluene, 23%vol. methylene chloride and 22%vol. heptane, in a glass vessel, and to this solution M-MAO was added together with 0.136 mmol of 1-hexene so to obtain a molar ratio Al/Ni = 710. The precontact mixture was injected into the reactor as described in Example 1. Then polymerization stage (III) was carried out at a total pressure of 2,500 kPa (25 bar) at 60°C, for 2 hours, thus obtaining 175g of polymer composition, in the form of spheroid particles having good flowability and containing 42.9% wt. of ethylene polymer.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 33, line 2, and ending at line 12, with the following paragraph.

~~The procedure described in Example 2 was repeated with the only difference that, in stage (II)(b), the precontact solution was prepared by dissolving 2.16 mg (3.39  $\mu$ mol) of the catalyst [(2,4,6-Me<sub>3</sub>Ph)-N=C(An)-C(An)=N-(2,4,6-Me<sub>3</sub>Ph)]NiBr<sub>2</sub> in 10 ml of a solvent mixture containing toluene (55% vol.), methylene chloride (23% vol.) and heptane (22% vol.), and by adding M-MAO so to obtain a molar ratio Al/Ni = 710. The precontact mixture was treated and injected into the reactor as described in Example 1. Then polymerization stage (III) was carried out at a total pressure of 2,500 kPa (25 bar) at 60°C, for 2 hours, thus obtaining 159g of polymer composition, in the form of spheroid particles having good flowability and containing 37.1% wt. of ethylene polymer.~~

The procedure described in Example 2 was repeated with the only difference that, in stage (II)(b), the precontact solution was prepared by dissolving 2.16 mg (3.39  $\mu$ mol) of the catalyst [(2,4,6-Me<sub>3</sub>Ph)-NNphN-(2,4,6-Me<sub>3</sub>Ph)]NiBr<sub>2</sub> in 10 ml of a solvent mixture containing toluene (55% vol.), methylene chloride (23% vol.) and heptane (22% vol.), and by adding M-MAO so to obtain a molar ratio Al/Ni = 710. The precontact mixture was treated and injected into the reactor as described in Example 1. Then polymerization stage (III) was carried out at a total pressure of 2,500 kPa (25 bar) at 60°C, for 2 hours, thus obtaining 159g of polymer composition, in the form of spheroid particles having good flowability and containing 37.1% wt. of ethylene polymer.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 33, line 14, and ending at line 18, with the following paragraph.

~~The procedure described in Example 3 was repeated with the only difference that, in stage (II)(b), to the precontact solution prepared by dissolving the catalyst [(2,4,6-Me<sub>3</sub>Ph)-N=C(An)-C(An)=N-(2,4,6-Me<sub>3</sub>Ph)]NiBr<sub>2</sub> in 10 ml of a solvent mixture containing toluene (55% vol.), methylene chloride (23% vol.), hexane (10.5% vol.) and heptane (11.5% vol.), were further added 0.17 mmol of 1-hexene and M-MAO so to obtain a molar ratio Al/Ni = 710.~~

The procedure described in Example 3 was repeated with the only difference that, in stage (II)(b), to the precontact solution prepared by dissolving the catalyst [(2,4,6-Me<sub>3</sub>Ph)-NNphN-(2,4,6-Me<sub>3</sub>Ph)]NiBr<sub>2</sub> in 10 ml of a solvent mixture containing toluene (55% vol.), methylene chloride (23% vol.), hexane (10.5% vol.) and heptane (11.5% vol.), were further added 0.17 mmol of 1-hexene and M-MAO so to obtain a molar ratio Al/Ni = 710.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 33 line 25, and ending at line 27, with the following paragraph.

~~The procedure described in Example 1 was repeated with the only difference that, in the stage (II)(b) and in ethylene polymerization [stage (III)], instead of MMAO, was used a mixture of MAO and TIOA, and [(2,4,6-Me<sub>3</sub>Ph)-N=C(An)-C(An)=N-(2,4,6-Me<sub>3</sub>Ph)]NiBr<sub>2</sub> was used as the catalyst.~~

The procedure described in Example 1 was repeated with the only difference that, in the stage (II)(b) and in ethylene polymerization [stage (III)], instead of MMAO, was used a mixture of MAO and TIOA, and [(2,4,6-Me<sub>3</sub>Ph)-NNphN-(2,4,6-Me<sub>3</sub>Ph)]NiBr<sub>2</sub> was used as the catalyst.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 33, line 28, and ending at page 34, line 2, with the following paragraph.

~~More specifically, the precontact solution was prepared by dissolving 2.16 mg (3.39  $\mu$ mol) of the catalyst [(2,4,6-Me<sub>3</sub>Ph)-N=C(An)-C(An)=N-(2,4,6-Me<sub>3</sub>Ph)]NiBr<sub>2</sub> in 12 ml of a solvent mixture containing toluene (40% vol.) and heptane (60% vol.); to the obtained mixture were added 0.17 mmol of 1-hexene and a mixture of MAO and TIOA, at a molar ratio MAO/TIOA=4, so to obtain a molar ratio Al/Ni = 873. The precontact~~

~~mixture was treated and injected into the reactor as described in Example 1. Then polymerization stage (III) was carried out at a total pressure of 2,500 kPa (25 bar) at 60°C, for 2 hours, thus obtaining 144g of polymer composition, in the form of spheroid particles having good flowability and containing 29.1% wt. of ethylene polymer.~~

More specifically, the precontact solution was prepared by dissolving 2.16 mg (3.39  $\mu$ mol) of the catalyst [(2,4,6-Me<sub>3</sub>Ph)-NNphN-(2,4,6-Me<sub>3</sub>Ph)]NiBr<sub>2</sub> in 12 ml of a solvent mixture containing toluene (40% vol.) and heptane (60% vol.); to the obtained mixture were added 0.17 mmol of 1-hexene and a mixture of MAO and TIOA, at a molar ratio MAO/TIOA=4, so to obtain a molar ratio Al/Ni = 873. The precontact mixture was treated and injected into the reactor as described in Example 1. Then polymerization stage (III) was carried out at a total pressure of 2,500 kPa (25 bar) at 60°C, for 2 hours, thus obtaining 144g of polymer composition, in the form of spheroid particles having good flowability and containing 29.1% wt. of ethylene polymer.